

# Z88 EPROM

February 1990

Vol.4 No.1

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## Club Addresses

All articles for Z88 EPROM and any membership matters (except Software Library) should be sent to:

Z88 USERS' CLUB  
68 WELLINGTON STREET  
LONG EATON  
NOTTINGHAM  
NG10 4NG

All requests for software from the Club Software Library, (but not special offers), items for inclusion in the Library, and EPROMs for erasure should be sent to:

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GUILDFORD  
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GU1 3PL

Please note that the Library address is the one to use when sending for a list of Library programs - this list is not available from the main Club address. Be sure to enclose 50p for the list.

The Club CLI Library is run by:

MICHAEL HEY  
18 WOODSIDE ROAD  
SANDIACRE  
NOTTINGHAM  
NG10 5GP

Any CLI's for the Library, requests for CLI's and the list of CLI programs should be sent to Michael Hey.

ALWAYS include your Membership Number with any correspondence. This is not just to be awkward - now the Club is large it can be very time-consuming searching the database for a member's number.

Your number is printed on the address label of each issue of Z88 EPROM. Please be sure to enclose a stamped-addressed envelope with anything needing a reply.

## Editorial

First on the agenda this time must be to wish you all a rather belated New Year - even though when you read this Christmas probably seems a long time ago!

At the time of writing (mid-January) I am having a problem supplying Z88 keyboards. Cambridge Computer are out of stock of keyboard components, and don't expect supplies for "several weeks". Consequently I have rather a backlog of outstanding orders. People who have ordered keyboards should have received a letter explaining the situation, and the sole purpose of this note is to warn anyone ordering a keyboard that there might be a delay of several weeks. Having said that, it seems amazing to me that CCL can be inept enough to run out of something as vital and popular as keyboard components. I suppose ours is not to reason why.....

News now of a new Club Benefit - EPROM Vouchers. These are free vouchers - one for every £50 spent - with goods purchased from HiTEK Marketing, a new Z88 dealership established by my Brother, Dave. Each EPROM Voucher is worth 1 issue of Z88 EPROM, and can be redeemed as part or full payment of your membership renewal. (Vouchers valid for UK membership only.) This is effectively an extra 2% off HiTEK's already keen prices. See HiTEK's advertisement in this issue for further details. (Please note that although HiTEK Marketing is run by my Brother, it is completely independent of the Club.)

You may be surprised to find three book reviews in this one issue. This follows the recent release of two of the books - Z88 Magic and the Dabhand Guide. The third book reviewed, Frank Flaig's Z88 Power Computing, has been around for some time, but we have never before got around to reviewing it! These three reviews plus our previous efforts on Z88 Computing (Vol 3 No 3) and the BBC BASIC Manual (Vol 3 No 2) leave only Using Your Z88 and the Z88 Software Developers' Notes from CCL - any reviews of these would be gratefully received.



Finally, before I close this editorial, a little moan. I thought I had made it perfectly clear in previous issues that the Club Software Library is not based at the Long Eaton address, but is run (very well!) by Ian Braby at the Guildford address.

Why is it then that not a week goes by when I get a request for some Library Software? As I do not keep the software, I then have the inconvenience and expense of forwarding the package onto Ian, and the request gets delayed into the bargain! So please, please, please be sure to send your items to the correct address - if in doubt, everything is explained in the front of each issue. Thank you!

## Stop Press

As I go to press with this issue, I have just heard that Z88 software house Harvester Information Systems may be in some difficulty. I have heard from two independent sources that the company has ceased trading, and their telephones appear to have been disconnected. I hope to have more definite information for the next issue.

## Newslines

**RAKEWELL** are running more of their successful Z88 Training Days based at Milton Keynes. The courses are as follows:

**Steaming-up the Z88 - Friday Evening February 23rd -**

A short informal gathering for non-computer people to get familiar with the basic functions of the Z88 and PipeDream. Course fee £19.00 + VAT (£21.85).

**The Sixth Z88 Training Day - Saturday February 24th -**

A Whistle-stop tour on what the Z88 can be used for, covering setting up, printer driving, the Filer, PipeDream, Diary, communicating with other computers, Z88 survival guide, and workshops. Course fee £69.00 + VAT (£79.35) includes buffet lunch and course notes.

**The Fourth Z88 Follow-up Day - Saturday March 10th -**

Designed for people who have already attended the Training Day, with practical examples to work through. Covers the CLI and advanced use of PipeDream for both word-processing and spreadsheets. Course fee £69.00 + VAT (£79.35) includes buffet lunch and course notes.

Rakewell are also planning a Z88 Fact finding session, details and date to be announced.

For further information or to book a place, contact Vic Gerhardi on 0908 366009 or 0296 630617.

**APPLIED SYSTEMS DEVELOPMENT** have produced a new battery powered thermal printer suitable for use with the Z88. Very compact and weighing less than three pounds, the Personal 80 Mobile is powered by rechargeable batteries, a car cigarette lighter socket, or the mains, and is almost totally silent. The printer operates at 80 characters per second across 80 columns, and is available with either a serial or parallel interface.

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**CAMBRIDGE COMPUTER** have secured their first 'one-per-pupil' order for Z88s, from Middlesborough's new Macmillan City Technology College. Covering an initial 200 computers, the order confirms "CCL's increasing importance in the education sector - now our fastest growing sales area", according to UK Sales and Marketing Manager Roger Flack.

The computers have been issued to the college's first-year intake of 200 11 year olds, and have received an enthusiastic response. The college intends to issue Z88s to each new year group on entry.

**THE MUSIC SUITE** will be running the Members' Special Offer on their two transfer programs until the end of March 1990. Order before then and you can buy either the Z88-ST Link or Z88-Amiga Link for just £15 each - a saving of £4.95 off the normal price of £19.95. For details on how to contact The Music suite see their ad in this issue.



## Helpline

If you have a technical query, write to one of our Helpliners listed below. Please note that you should include a stamped addressed envelope or sufficient return postage for your reply.

**CLI Files** - Contact Michael Hey by post only at: 18 Woodside Road, Sandiacre, Nottingham. NG10 5GP

**Z88 to Amstrad PCW Link** - Please write in the first instance to: Mr A West, 16 Southway, Burgess Hill, Sussex. RH15 9ST.

**zBASE, CLI and all Wordmongers products except TX and Comms software** - Contact Jason Crook (ex of wordmongers) at 4 Salisbury Close, Princes Risborough, Bucks. HP17 0JF. Telephone 08444 7075. I will also write to order in zBASE.

**zBASE** - Help on commands and programming. I can accept info/programs on paper. EPROM, zTape cassettes or IBM disk. Contact Robin Jarvis, 27 Gloucester Road, Waterlooville, Hants. PO7 7BJ.

**Z88 to Amstrad CPC Link** - Contact Duncan W. Kennedy at 32 Otterston Grove, Dalgety Bay, Fife. KY11 5PA.

**BASIC Programming** - Contact Richard Russell at 59 Campbell Road, Gravesend, Kent. DA11 0JZ.

**Interfacing Z88 to various hardware - Mac, BBC, PADs, also UNIX and C experience** - Contact J.P. Knight Email JANET on jpknight@uk.ac.lut.suna, or snail mail during term time to Room 66, Hazlerigg-Rutland Hall, Loughborough University of Technology, Ashby Road, Loughborough, Leics, LE11 3TZ.

**PipeDream/Diary/General** - Contact Keith Winsor at 13 Swansea Road, Reading, Berks. RG1 8EY. Or Telecom Gold 82:TLR1747.

Can anyone offer Helpline for printer set ups?

# PipeDream

PipeDream is now available for the IBM PC and compatibles, and the Acorn Archimedes. It has been completely rewritten for these computers and contains many new facilities, whilst retaining complete file and keyboard compatibility with the Z88.

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## Members' Letters

Keith Winsor (1968)

13 Swansea Road

Reading

Dear Roy,

Here are some random jottings on Z88 bugs:

### Loading a file - 'Insert at slot'

Loading a file into an existing PipeDream document using the 'insert at slot' option results in the file being scattered across many columns. PipeDream appears to treat each column number as an offset relative to the previous one, rather than as an absolute value. What seems to happen is this (I've used numbers to keep it simple):

Column 1 of the second file loads into column 1 of the existing document.

Column 2 loads into the column two away from the previous one, i.e. column 3

Column 3 loads into the column three away from from the previous one, i.e. column 6

and so on.

Short of loading each column individually, I can't think of a work-around.

### Other bugs

The following refer to the Bug List in Sept/Oct 1989 :

PDM0001 - Re the bug in deleting rows, I have had a similar problem deleting a marked block from a spreadsheet containing 33 rows of fairly intricate cross-references. On issuing the <>BD command, the machine hung (sometimes needing a hard reset to recover it, other times just a soft reset worked).

On two occasions, <>BD caused the machine to spontaneously hard reset itself. Laugh? I nearly .....

A simple work around this is to blank the first cell to be deleted, then replicate this into the other cells to be cleared.

PDM0006 - Simon Phipp's problem that John hadn't been able to recreate seems to be when the 'next' file in the file list has different column widths/wrap margins. Using <>LFR is another easy way to provoke this. I haven't found a work-around yet.

SYS0001 - Is it not possible for the last line of BOOT.CLI to delete all files in RAM.-, thus preventing subsequent problems. Or, if this causes 'in use' errors, could it call a second CLI file, (perhaps stored in RAM.0/1/2) to do the same thing?

## Queries, Hints and Tips

Michael W. Hey (0703)

Sunday the 25th of March is an important day for certain people. It is Mothering Sunday (so don't forget those flowers - put a reminder in your Diary), and it is also the day when the clocks go forward.

Every year a number of people forget these events. Your Z88 cannot be expected to buy flowers for you, but it can advance its own Clock. Simply set the following entry in your Alarm:-

---DATE---	--TIME--	REASON/COMMAND
25/03/1990	02:00:00	#T`R`E`D03:00:04`E`E
BELL	ALARM TYPE	REPEAT EVERY No.OF TIMES
OFF	EXECUTE	NEVER NEVER

I believe that most (if not all) European Community countries change their clocks on the same date. Residents of other countries may have to adapt the Alarm date and time to suit local differences. The same "program" (suitably adapted) will put your Z88's Clock back on October 28th, or whenever.

Whilst on the subject of putting the Alarm to good use: my Z88's Clock gains about four seconds each week, so I run a similar "program" to re-set it every three weeks or so.

**Paul B. Smith (0788)**

I have a Brother HR10 daisywheel printer for which I have worked out all the settings, if these are of use to anyone.

Are members aware that Lindis International (po Box 10, Halesworth, Suffolk, IP19 0DX) sell links to Nimbus and Atari? I have a copy of the former and it works well.

I also have on disk a copy of what 'Micro User' called Z88-BBC Link II, which works as easily as the IBM Link II, but like that requires the PC Link II EPROM.

I have learnt a great deal from Frank Flaig's book 'Z88 Real Power Computing.

However, if you think readers would be interested in a far easier method of merging than Frank describes in his book, I will write a short article. (We're waiting, Paul! - Roy)

**Ian Arnold (1423)**

I would like to see some articles on two topics:

1. The PipeDream expression slot - with simple examples, especially on 'lookup', which I don't understand.
2. The printer driver simply explained!! I have a Casio FP-100 printer/plotter.

**E. G. Field**

I have PC Link II installed in the Z88 and want to transfer a spreadsheet in PipeDream to my office PC (Toshiba 3100e). I follow the procedure in the instructions and adopt the following procedure:

1. Transfer the Z88 spreadsheet to the PC.
2. Use the Converter program in PC Link II to convert from PD to 123. I actually use PC Planner Plus, not 123, but hope that this would not make any difference.
3. All appears to transfer well and the file name appears in the correct sub-directory in the PC. Using XTREE I can deduce that a number of bytes have been loaded into the PC VPP file.
4. When I try to load from the PC, nothing happens!



(The important thing which isn't mentioned here is whether PC Planner Plus supports the same file structure as Lotus 123. - Roy)

Angus Mackenzie (2162)

If anyone out there wants me to transfer files from Z88 EPROMs to Archimedes 3.5" disks I'd be happy to oblige if supplied with media and return postage. Please send to Angus Mackenzie, 19 Woodlands Road, Sparkhill, Birmingham. B11 4EH.

B. J. Edwards (3239)

My problem concerns transfer of text files from the Z88 to an Apricot using 'Windows'. There is a communications terminal in the software, and this works alright provided I insert LF characters with each CR.

I do this by reformatting the file using the following short BASIC program:

```
10 CLS:PRINT "LINE FEED INSERTION PROGRAM"  
20 INPUT "ENTER FILE NAME: "file$  
30 F%=OPENIN(":.RAM.1/"+file$)  
40 G%=OPENOUT(":.RAM.1/TEMP")  
50 REPEAT  
60 B%=BGET#F%:BPUT#G%,B%  
70 IF B%=13 BPUT#G%,10  
80 UNTIL EOF#F%  
90 CLOSE#0:PRINT"CONVERSION COMPLETE"
```

For each file to be transferred I run this program and then transfer the file TEMP using Import/Export. Rather tedious and requires spare memory in the Z88.

I have tried a similar program to put data to the output port by:

```
40 G%=OPENOUT(":.COM.0")
```

However all this seems to do is open a COM file, but not to output data. Also, having transferred the data, I still have the problems in retaining the existing format, (particularly when there are tab characters) when using either Microsoft Word or Write.

If anyone can help with any of the above, this would be very much appreciated.

I. C. Mayo

Has anyone managed to make a Z88 'talk' to a Psion organiser through the Comms Link?

Barry E. Allen (2557)

Regarding the review of Harvester Z88 Data Organiser where it implies that PipeDream cannot do multi-field searches. I have, and I'm sure I'm not alone, done multi-field selective printing, spooling and saving. So it is, to use the example in the review, possible to search for all the "Smiths" with "01-" telephone numbers.

I find PipeDream a perfectly acceptable database. I put a "-" sign in column A where I want headings shown in column B. If I had fields as follows:

B Surname, C Forename, D Sex, E Phone, F Eye Colour, G Height, H Weight, I Age.

A search for all the male 'Smith's with '01' phone numbers under a weight of '180lbs' with 'blue eyes' could be entered as follows:

PRINT a selection of rows as follows:

```
a1="-" : b1="Smith" & d1="M" & e1="01^#" & h1<180 & f1="blue"
```

Adjacent sets of fields can be printed using a column range. If the fields which require printing are not adjacent then the column widths can be reduced to zero. A CLI file can be used to reset or even set the field widths.

If you have enough memory the selection can of course be saved as a subfile. PipeDream3 on the Archimedes has the facility to print to the screen making it an even better card index database program.

View Professional will also print to the screen and with a suitably modified printer driver will pause at the bottom of the screen. I have also written a 'patch' to allow mail merging like Archimedes PipeDream. I am interested in mailmerge for the Z88. Does anyone know how to make Z88 PipeDream print to the screen?

THE  
LAST  
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# Z88 Magic

Written by the people who bought you Z88 Training Days, described recently as 'Splendiferous' by a reader in the September/October 89's issue.

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# Book Review: Z88 Real Power Computing

By Michael Hey (0703)

"Z88 Real Power Computing" - a snappy choice for a title - but then Frank Flaig says that he used to work in sales and marketing. He was not a "computer professional", but a user who compiled this book from notes made while using his own Z88.

He would appear to be a great fan of this computer because he enthuses over its features and facilities constantly.

The style of writing is a bit rough and ready, and the punctuation is rather haphazard, just like my book review before it went through the mill of correction. The printing and binding are a bit rough and ready too, but at least the "comb" binding system means that the book stays open at the page you are reading rather than closing as soon as you place your fingers on the Z88's keyboard.

The subject matter of the book is about using the Z88 to achieve real jobs in the most efficient manner. It is rather like a vastly overgrown collection of queries, hints and tips. There is also the now traditional tour round the Diary, BASIC, PrinterEd, etc., with little hints and tips sprinkled here and there. Some of these tips are well known, while others fall into the "Why didn't I think of that?" class. The section on BASIC is very brief, and no substitute for the M-Tec reference manual.

Near the end of the book is a brief description of third-party software available (the Wordmongers collection, "Spellmaster", "T-Touch", the Harvester things, etc.), and some of the Z88 books, though these are now slightly out of date. There are also further sources of information - including the Z88 Users' Club of Lone Eaton. (He has obviously seen the place!) Finally, there is a three page guide to touch-typing.

The main theme of the book is how to get the most out of PipeDream, and he spends a great deal of time explaining how to use the IF, CHOOSE, INDEX and LOOKUP commands to achieve great things:



how to organise input and results conveniently on the Z88's small screen without continually having to scroll all over the place.

Frank Flaig also explains how to use PipeDream to produce mailshots and labels, combining a letter and database address list. (Another version of how to do this once appeared in Z88 Eprom, but can anyone remember when?)

Other projects described are a currency converter, calorie counter, trip computer (fuel consumption & time calculator), and an invoice & quotation generator. There is a section on how to bodge up a graphic bar chart, and a fascinating foreign language translator. (I suspect that this last item will tend to produce Monty Python type translations of the "Spirit is willing but the flesh is weak" into "the booze is fine but the meat's gone bad" variety.)

Whether or not you need fuel calculators or mail merge yourself this book should be of great value to you because Frank Flaig demonstrates how to use facilities like "lookup" which appear in the User Guide but without any explanation of why you might want to use them. The book is full of worked examples (with pitfalls pointed out) which an imaginative person could then adapt to his own uses. For example there is a CLI routine to take the Catalogue Files facility of the Filer and extract from it the memory used by a Directory of files. Just analysing how he has done this ought to suggest all sorts of other little tricks for manipulating the Z88.

My most serious criticism of the book is the lack of an Index. The Z88 is the ideal computer for producing Indexes because you can have two "PipeDreams" open as you write: one for the text and one to jot down items for eventual inclusion in the Index. (All future budding authors please take note!) Frank Flaig also frequently writes "for more about this subject see elsewhere in the book", and this information is often hard to locate.

This is a fascinating book, full of facts and information, but poorly presented. I would recommend that Mr Flaig produces a second edition, properly proof-read and with an Index and a pretty cover.

Having said that I shall still buy a copy.

Z88 Real Power Computing, by Frank R. Flaig, published by F.R.Flaig, Dept U2C, 105, Park Avenue, Broadstairs, Kent, England. CT10 2XL Telephone: (0843) 601172. Price £9.95.



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## Book Review - Z88 Magic

"Yawn, not another book covering the same old User Guide fodder..." I here you all saying. Well, the answer to that is yes....., and no!

Z88 Magic is indeed a book which might be described as a 'general tutorial for Z88 users'. To fulfil this specification, it inevitably covers the same old topics as virtually every other Z88 book: PipeDream, the Diary, Calculator, Filer etc. etc. Am I making the book sound boring?

Good, because Vic Gerhardi (one of the authors) has made quite enough money out of his successful Z88 Training Days, and I wouldn't like to think of him making too much money out of this book!

Seriously, the authors Vic and Gill Gerhardi and Andy Berry have worked very hard to make this book totally different from any other Z88 book before it. The book does indeed cover many of the topics mentioned above, but it covers them in a new way - either more comprehensively than before, with a wealth of hints and tips along the way, or in a lighter, more understandable manner, making difficult subjects a pleasure to learn about.

The key to the writing style is hinted at in the book's title. The Introduction begins:

'Welcome to a magical mystery tour of the Z88. You are about to enter a world that is full of challenges and dangers. The ultimate prize that awaits you at the end of the quest is happiness in your relationship with your Z88 but you will have to travel far and wide to reach that Utopia. You will encounter gremlins, witches cauldrons, magic languages and many-headed monsters, as well as helping hands and sympathetic shoulders to cry on when the going gets too rough.'

Although the style of the introduction might give you the impression of a childrens' fairy tale book, or role-play adventure game, it is in fact a very clever device used throughout the book, both to lighten the proceedings where necessary, and to illustrate many points to make them much easier to grasp.

Please don't get the impression that Z88 Magic is a light work, padded out with fairy stories just for the sake of it.



The book runs to 322 pages, and probably contains more information (both old and new) than any other Z88 book. After the introduction, there is an 18 page section called 'Z88 Awareness' - going over the basic layout of the machine for new users. On page 25, we leap into the cauldron, starting to cover the applications in depth.

Over 100 pages cover PipeDream, with a large section of that specifically handling spreadsheets. Many new tips are to be found in this section, and even proficient Z88 users will find something new. The book then goes on to cover the Diary and Filer, before a chapter strangely titled 'Talking To Other Weirdos'.

No, this isn't a contact area for other Z88 users, but a comprehensive review of the Z88's ability to communicate with many other computers and printers. The text clearly explains what you need to do to get the Z88 to talk to a printer, as well as how to print from the different applications.

The next chapter on BASIC starts by apologising for 'leaving out much of the interesting stuff' - a constraint caused by having one chapter to cover a subject that could be more easily covered in a separate book. Having said that, this 52 page section does an admirable job of explaining the basics of BASIC, and again the text is liberally sprinkled with examples to illustrate one point or another.

There is a short but useful section on using PipeDream with mailmerge, and a chapter on OZ and the CLI. Finally, after a Tutorial section with worked examples, there is a Technical Appendix covering such things as changing batteries, hard and soft resets and the ASCII character set.

What really sets this book apart from others I have seen is the excellent Contents and Index sections - together a total of 22 pages of references, which make anything in the book simply a pleasure to locate. There is even an alphabetic index of the many tips given in the book. The effort the authors have put into these two sections of the book was well worth it, and they should be highly commended! I am so often frustrated by not being able to locate that snippet of information that I just know is there, but is not listed in the index.

Z88 Magic. Price £14.95. Published by Kuma Computers Ltd, 12 Horseshoe Park, Pangbourne, Berkshire. RG8 7JW. Tel:0734 844335.

# Book Review - Z88 Dabhand Guide

By Michael Hey (0703)

The Z88 Dabhand Guide was written by Trinity Concepts ("Authors of the Z88 Operating System") so one would expect a real insight into how the computer works and how to get the best use out of it.

It was designed to "introduce the Z88 as something that you will find useful [and] to cover in more detail those areas only briefly described in the User Guide supplied with the Z88."

I opened this book with a sense of eager anticipation. Here are the techniques for using the Z88, straight from the pens (or PipeDreams) of the Genii who created it!

What I actually found was a re-hash of the manual, going over exactly the same ground but with more words. There is little new information here. Each topic to be covered is described in great detail in very easy stages. It is like a book written for five-year-olds - "Topsy and Tim Learn about Their New Z88."

For example a great deal of space is devoted to getting started with PipeDream, and using it as a word processor, producing an elementary address book, and doing some V.A.T. calculations (the sort that you could do easily with a £5 pocket calculator).

Using the Alarm and the Filer etc., are explained in tedious detail, with little extra information given. The best short-cut (using the TAB key to mark and un-mark extra files) is not shown: I learned that from Wordmongers, by the way. Using the CLI (which receives the sketchiest treatment in the User Guide) is not even mentioned in the section concerning the Filer. It does appear in the chapter on BASIC as a means of transferring programs from PipeDream to BASIC (using #B and .j, just as described in the User Guide).



The section on BASIC programming is too brief to be of any practical use: if you want to start BASIC programming borrow a starting with BASIC book from the library and then buy the M-TEC guide which is infinitely more thorough.

Having found so few points in favour of this book, what can I find to complain about? Well, it has no Index (Oh, not again!). The Contents at the front of the book are very detailed, so it is just a matter of skimming through that and trying to find the info you require.

Now the Big Complaint: this book has not been finished. It is full of little notes between the authors pointing out where further bits should go. For example, page 261-

### INTERNATIONAL VERSIONS

[[paul]]

{interaction with Julie required because of all the accents, etc}

It shows a disgraceful lack of attention to detail (and absence of any sort of proof-reading) that stuff like this should get into print. (I kept looking for bits of shopping lists, and items like "don't forget wedding anniversary - Tuesday" to appear in the margins but nothing as entertaining as this got into the book, which is a pity as it might have lightened the tedium a bit.)

There are also cross references of the type "for more information see page xx", where no one has got round to putting the page number in!

If this book was written by the authors of the Z88 Operating System I can now understand why the operating system turned out the way it did!

This book costs £14.95. That would buy you 18 months subscription to Z88 Eprom, which is much more interesting. If you need a book to explain how to use your Z88 "Z88 Computing" by Ian Sinclair costs only £9.95 and is rather more concise (and was reviewed in Z88 Eprom May-June 1989).

Z88: A Dabhand Guide, by Trinity Concepts, published by Dabs Press, 5, Victoria Lane, Whitefield, Manchester. M25 6AL Telephone 061-776 8423. Fax 061-776 8425. Price £14.95



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## CLI Library Update

Here are some contributions from Dennis Groning (1080), available in two selections:

**X010 boot.cli** Two variations on a theme. These are recommended for anyone who has read about the 'boot.cli' in the User Guide, but can't work out what it means. (1k)

**X011 Delete :RAM.-** Three variations on another theme. These routines erase and copy any files lurking in :RAM.- which might otherwise cause problems due to the dreaded Filer bug. (1k)

And there's more (see next month's Z88 EPROM....)

All selections from the CLI Library are available as listings or on EPROM, Z-Tape cassette, or XOB-compatible disk. (No PC or QL disks, please!). Be sure to send return postage and address label with any request. A list of all current CLI titles is available - please send a stamped, addressed envelope plus 20p to cover printing. Requests for any of the above should be sent only to the CLI Library address on page 2 (and NOT to Ian Braby at the main Library, or me at the main Club address!! - Roy)



## Comms Comment

by Simon Phipps (0221)

A new (probably occasional) column for Z88 EPROM. In Comms Comment, I hope to be able to bring those of you with modems some of the news about what is happening and where to dial, and those of you without modems the incentive to buy one!

First, allow me to introduce myself. I'm Simon Phipps, and I'm a technical consultant with Unisys Ltd. I spend most of my time advising present and future customers on communications links for their computers. I'm a keen Z88 user and one of many within Unisys, where we have a good electronic mail network for distributing information and software. Electronic mail has become a necessity for us, and has revolutionised our company.

Just some snippets this issue. I am aware of two bulletin boards with Z88 areas (contact me with details of more!). They are Lightfingers on 0202 485723 (24h 8N1 3-24: see below), and Kybernesis on 01-673 7294 (24h 8N1 3-24).

Of these, Kybernesis has a much wider range of Z88 files to download and also has an area for Psion Organiser support funded by Psion. Kybernesis appear to be looking for a moderator for the Z88 area of their board. Lightfingers has a smaller selection of files, but is nonetheless worth a call. Both support XModem for all you zTerm users.

In the preceding paragraph there were a number of phrases which I suspect sounded like Swahili to many people. A bulletin board is a computer you can connect to over the telephone running a program which will allow you to enter into (or just read) written dialogues with other computer users like yourself and send and receive programmes, usually free of charge.

There are hundreds of bulletin boards all over the country (there's often a list in Personal Computer World), and most of them are linked together in informal networks, joining the dialogues together

to form huge conferences. The brackets after the telephone numbers contain the descriptions of how to connect to the bulletin board. "24h" indicates you can ring them whenever you like; "8N1" indicates that your terminal emulator needs to be set to 8 bit characters, no parity checking and one stop bit, and "3-24" indicates that you can use just about any modem to ring them up.

If there's demand these can be further explained in a future Comment. XModem is the name of a file transfer protocol used for grabbing files off a bulletin board onto your Z88.

If you have any comments or questions, please contact me on Telecom Gold at 83:NTG339 or on FIDOnet node 2:252/22 (Winchester Remote: 0962 69322, 24h 8N1 3-24).

(Let me know what you think of the new Comms area - whether you think it is worthwhile, if it should be monthly or just occasional, and whether there are any other specialist areas you would like to see catered for - for example, a section with case histories of how the Z88 is used in business. - Roy)

## Software Review - Event Control System

The Event Control System is a program that has been available since last summer. You may remember the review in Z88 EPROM of the 'Stopwatches' program from Racing Car Computers (Vol.3 No.3). That program enabled you to keep track of competitors with many lap times, for example in a field event. The Event Control System (ECS) has to some extent grown from that program - the timing core of the program is very similar - but rather than allowing many times for relatively few competitors, this program allows you to record a single time for many competitors.



The original idea came from Stan Sutherland, a long-standing Club member, who for some time had acted as a commentator on various road rally events - the Lombard RAC Rally among them. As a rally commentator you need a system which can handle many competitors (the ECS can handle 180!), split over several groups or classes, and the facility to keep track of positions within the field.

The ECS grew from Stan's requirements for rallying, but the program is equally applicable to any event where many competitors need to be recorded - swimming, cycling, horse and sailing events to name but a few.

The ECS comes supplied on the normal 32k ROM card, together with a 15 page A4 manual which is clearly written and even sports an index! Installation in the Z88 (which must have at least 128k expansion) gives an addition to the applications list called 'Events', which can be selected with [W]. The manual makes the point that the Z88 system clock should read the correct time, as competitors' times can be entered as actual start and stop times. Once started, ECS asks you for the name of the event, and the distance of the event in either miles or kilometres.

There are two distinct operating modes within ECS - ENTER mode and VIEW mode. Enter mode allows for the insertion and editing of competitor information, including entries for Number, Group and Class, two Name fields, and Type and Model details. There is also a two-line area called Note Pad. This is very useful if you are commentating on an event, as in this area can jot down all the extra information which makes for an interesting commentary. The Note Pad area is always displayed along with the competitor's details.

View mode is the main working mode of the program. It allows for the viewing of all competitors' information, (but not editing), and displays the current ranking of all the competitors. Start/Finish times are entered in this mode, and the current clock is also controlled.

In enter mode you are given a new template screen for each competitor, up to a maximum of 180. Entered details can be saved to a file, and the option to load a previously saved set of competitors is given when starting the program.



Similarly, if the same competitors are competing in several events, it is possible to load them into new instantiations of ECS and just change the Event Name and Distance. The program will even cope with several competitors with the same number, as might happen in some events.

It is simply a case of pressing ESC to toggle between View and Enter modes, so it is simple to edit any entries or add further notes during an event. To view the information on any particular competitor is easy - you either use <>FC (Find competitor) and enter the competitor's number, or use the cursor keys to scroll through the pages of details.

Perhaps the easiest way to illustrate the level of control this package offers is to list the available commands. Where the use of a command is obvious, there will be no explanation.

<>VR - View Rankings. This produces a sorted table of competitors, ordered depending on any group or class restrictions set. (See <>RG & <>RC below.) The table shows the competitor's number, name, group/class, time, speed, place, time from leader, and time from overall leader (in the case where the ranking just shows a particular class or group).

<>FL - Load competitors.

<>FS - Save competitors. Also saves times. File is compacted to minimise memory usage.

<>GO - Start current clock

<>ST - Stop current clock

<>ET - Enter start/finish times. There are three methods of entering a time - the Z88 will time a competitor using its own clock if you use <>GO and <>ST. The second option is to enter the competitors time directly while in edit mode. The third option is to use <>ET, and enter the actual starting time. When <>ET is used again to enter the finish time, the program works out the elapsed time automatically.

ESC - Toggles modes.

TAB - Blank record entry. The TAB key moves you from View mode to Enter mode, but also gives a blank record sheet ready for a new competitor.

- <>RG - Restrict by group. This causes the Rankings table to show only the rankings within the selected group.
- <>RC - Restrict by class. As <>RG, but shows rankings within selected class. By using both <>RG and <>RC you can display rankings of a class within a group.
- <>NR - No restrictions. Removes any group/class restrictions.
- <>PC - Print out competitors.
- <>PR - Print out rankings. Selection affected by <>RG & <>RC.
- <>CT - Change event title.
- <>CD - Change distance. (Used to calculate average speeds of competitors.)
- <>NEW - Restart application.
- <>FC - Find competitor.
- <>DC - Delete competitor.
- <>RAT - Reset all times. This sets the times for all competitors to zero. Use with caution!
- <>DIE - Abandon application. The equivalent of <>KILL from the Z88 Index.

That completes the summary of commands, and should give you an idea of the comprehensive control the package offers over times and information.

In conclusion, if you are an event commentator or organiser, a coach or competitor, this package is sure to be of great value. Combining a database of competitors and timing details works well, and the quick and easy generation of ranking tables would I'm sure be a godsend to many users. The Event Control System, together with the Stopwatches package from Racing Car Computers, must make the Z88 the logical first choice for any timing applications.

The Event Control System is available from Front Line Computers Limited, 30 Blackthorn Grove, Nuneaton, Warwickshire. CV11 6UX. Price £59.95.

Front Line have generously offered a £10 discount to Club members. Order from them quoting Club Special Offer and your membership number at £49.95. Send current envelope as proof of membership.)

## Small Ads and Swapshop

This service is FREE to members. Please keep the length of ads to a minimum, and send them to the main Club Address. Your entry will then be put in the next available issue of Z88 EPROM. Please bear in mind that the magazine is prepared some time in advance, and therefore you may receive an issue before the one containing your entry.

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## NEXT ISSUE OUT MID-MARCH

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